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REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES:
ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

Environment

Extract from the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its nineteenth session

(Nairobi, 21 April - 2 May 1997)

The attached text reproduces chapter III of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its nineteenth session, entitled "Matters requiring the specific attention of the General Assembly and/or the Economic and Social Council", and is made available to the Council for its information. The complete report will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25) and will be before the Assembly for its consideration.

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CHAPTER III

MATTERS REQUIRING THE SPECIFIC ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND/OR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Date and place of the twentieth session of the Governing Council

28. At its 8th plenary meeting, on 7 February 1997, the Governing Council decided that its twentieth session would be held at Nairobi from 17 to 28 May 1999. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 4 April 1997, however, the Council decided, in the light of paragraph 14 of its decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997, that its twentieth session would be of five days duration, from 24 to 28 May 1999.

B. Special session of the Governing Council to review the results and decisions of the General Assembly at its special session for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

29. Also at its 8th plenary meeting, the Governing Council decided to hold its own special session, from 12 to 14 November 1997, to review the results and decisions of the General Assembly at its special session for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, to be held in June 1997. At its 10th plenary meeting, on 4 April 1997, however, the Council decided, in order to allow the secretariat sufficient time to complete the tasks assigned to it by the Council at its nineteenth session, that the dates of the special session should not be fixed as yet but that it should be held over a three day period between late 1997 and the end of January 1998.

30. By section I, paragraph 12 of its decision 19/32, the Council approved an extraordinary additional appropriation of Fund resources in 1998-1999 of up to $1 million for the management and administrative support costs budget, $500,000 of which would be earmarked for the costs associated with the anticipated special session in the event that they were not covered by the United Nations regular budget.

C. Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme

31. By paragraph 1 of its decision 19/1, the Governing Council adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21. The Declaration is annexed to that decision. By paragraph 2 of the same decision, the Council requested the Executive Director to transmit the Declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to be considered in the ongoing reform process of the United Nations system. By paragraph of the decision, it requested the President of the Governing Council to present the Declaration to the high-level segment of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the General Assembly at its special session.

2. Contribution of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to the special session of the General Assembly in 1997

32. By paragraph 4 of its decision 19/2, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to submit for the consideration of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, the meeting of its Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group, and the United Nations General Assembly at its special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, the documents on the implementation by the United Nations Environment Programme of Agenda 21, the contribution of the Governing Council to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 (sections A and B, paragraphs 4-19 of UNEP/GC.19/30 and UNEP/GC.19/INF.13), the report on the Global Environment Outlook, 3/ the observations and recommendations regarding the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the 1990s 4/ and Governing Council decision 19/20. By paragraph 5 of the same decision, the Governing Council invited the Commission and its Ad Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group to take those documents into account in the preparation of the Commission's report on the implementation of Agenda 21 for submission to the special session of the General Assembly.

33. In paragraph 6 of the same decision, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/181 and on behalf of the Governing Council, to bring to the attention of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its fifth session, its Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group and the General Assembly at its special session, the outcome of the Council's consideration of the issues related to the review and appraisal of the implementation by the United Nations Environment Programme of Agenda 21. By paragraph 7 of the decision, the Council requested the Executive Director to take the necessary measures to follow up the actions requested of the United Nations Environment Programme by the General Assembly at its special session. By paragraph 8 of the decision, it reiterated its request to the President of the Council (see para. 31 above) to present the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme to the high-level segment of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the General Assembly at its special session.

3. Report on the Global Environment Outlook

34. By paragraph 1 of its decision 19/3, the Governing Council noted with appreciation the timely production of the new, comprehensive report on the state of the world environment, Global Environment Outlook-1, as requested in Council decision 18/27 C of 26 May 1995, as well as the participatory assessment process (known as the Global Environment Outlook process) which has been established to support UNEP assessment activities, and its components (the scientific working groups, network of collaborating centres, regional and United Nations wide consultative mechanisms). By paragraph 2 of the same decision, the Council concurred with the Executive Director's

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3/ UNEP/GC.19/26.

4/ UNEP/GC.19/20, annex.

proposal to include the executive summary of the report, together with the views of the Council thereon, as an integral part of the report of the Council to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and to make the full text of the Global Environment Outlook report available to the General Assembly at that session. By paragraph 4 of the decision, it urged Governments, United Nations agencies and bodies, and other institutions to participate in, and contribute to, the future activities of the Global Environment Outlook process.

F. Progress report on good environmental housekeeping practices and guidelines in the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations system

35. In its decision 19/10, the Governing Council took note with appreciation of the progress report of the Executive Director on good environmental housekeeping practices and guidelines in the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations system (UNEP/GC.19/28), encouraged her to continue her initiatives in this area and requested her to communicate with the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to urge the adoption of good environmental housekeeping practices throughout the United Nations system.

G Chemicals management

36. By paragraph 1 of its decision 19/13 A, the Governing Council confirmed the present mandate of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals in International Trade, as given by the Council in its decision 18/12, and, by paragraph 4 of the same decision, requested the Executive Director to convene, in 1997, together with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, a diplomatic conference for the purposes of adopting and signing an international legally binding instrument for the application of the prior informed consent procedure.

37. In paragraph 5 of that decision, the Governing Council called upon Governments to provide the necessary financial and technical assistance to enable the full and effective functioning of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

H. Water management

38. In its decision 19/14 A, the Governing Council endorsed the proposed role for the United Nations Environment Programme as secretariat of the Global Programme of Action and, according priority to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action in its work, requested the Executive Director, inter alia, to expand the activities of the Global Programme of Action to all regional seas programmes and to establish links with other appropriate regional plans and programmes or conventions.

39. In paragraph 8 of that decision, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to recommend to the competent international organizations that they formally endorse those parts of the Global Programme of Action that are relevant to their mandates and, by paragraph 9, it urged Governments to

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take appropriate action within the governing bodies of relevant organizations and programmes, requesting, inter alia, the according of appropriate priority to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action in the work programme of each organization. In paragraphs 11 and 12, the Governing Council requested the Administrative Committee on Coordination to continue reporting to it at its regular sessions; and invited the Administrative Committee's Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, in collaboration with its Subcommittee on Water, to perform the functions of a steering committee on technical cooperation and assistance for the Global Programme of Action.

1. The efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme toward the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, 1995-1996

40. By its decision 19/17, the Governing Council welcomed the entry into force of the Convention and urged all States that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so. In paragraph 6 of that decision, it took note of the [illegible] of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to accept the offer of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide the administrative and support arrangements for the Convention Secretariat.

41. In paragraphs 4 and 5 of that decision, the Council requested the Executive Director to maintain the function of UNDP as a global centre of excellence on desertification control, to continue and intensify research on development collaboration with leading world scientific institutions and centres of excellence on desertification and land degradation and drought issues, and to participate actively in assisting Governments and non-governmental organizations to implement the Convention and resolution 5/1 of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, on urgent action for Africa.

42. In paragraph 9 (b), it encouraged the Executive Director to invite other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, financial institutions, funds and other interested parties to participate in the formulation and conclusion of partnership agreements or arrangements for the implementation of the convention at all levels in affected developing countries, particularly in Africa.

43. By paragraph 8 of the decision, it authorized the Executive Director to submit, on behalf of the Council, her report on the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme towards the implementation of the Convention in 1995 and 1996, through the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, to be held from 7 to 25 April 1997, to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its first session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session and, by its paragraphs 10 and 11, urged Governments to provide relevant research and up-to-date data on the status of desertification and land degradation at the national level for the consideration of the Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention and, together with other interested organization, to make further contributions for the implementation of the Convention in affected developing countries, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

J. Governance of the United Nations Environment Programme

44. By paragraph 1 of its decision 19/32, the Governing Council decided to establish a High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, with the mandate, inter alia, to make reform and policy recommendations to the Governing Council, to provide guidance and advice to the Executive Director between sessions of the Governing Council and to support the Executive Director in mobilizing adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP.

45. By paragraph 7 of the same decision, the Governing Council decided that, with a view to strengthening the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, its mandate should include, inter alia, monitoring and assessing the implementation of Council decisions on administrative, budgetary and programme matters, reviewing the draft programme of work and budget during their preparation and preparing draft decisions on the basis of inputs from the secretariat.